

NEWS RELEASE

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Laurier Science Challenge won by UTS for third year in a row

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WATERLOO – Students at the University of Toronto Schools (UTS) are fast developing a well-earned reputation for excellence in the sciences. For the third year in a row, a team from UTS has won Ontario’s most comprehensive science competition, the Laurier Science Challenge

UTS dominated the 2004 Laurier Science Challenge by scoring 246 out of 300 (or 82 percent) in the team category. As well, UTS placed six students in the top 10 of the individual competition.

Adam Lerer captured first place with a remarkable score of 56 out of 60 (or 93.3 percent). Xiaodi Wu placed second with a score of 50 out of 60 (or 83.3 percent), while Nikate Singh tied for third with Aditya Natarajan of William Lyon Mackenzie collegiate institute (WLMCI) in North York with a score of 48 out of 60 (or 80 percent).

“UTS has been a very strong competitor in the Laurier Science Challenge,” said Art Szabo, dean of the faculty of science. “UTS has established itself as a school with elite science students and now has the team to beat in the competition.”

Other UTS winners include Anahita Safavi-Naini, who placed fifth by scoring 47 out of 60 (or 78.3 percent), Stephanie Siu, who placed eighth with a score of 45 out of 60 (or 75 percent) and Anthony Chiu, who tied for ninth with Michael Chios of Sacred Heart high school by scoring 44 out of 60 (or 73.3 percent).

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WLMCI finished second in the team competition, while Markham district high school placed third. For the team competition, scores are determined by adding the top five individual scores from the school. The five winning schools in the team competition each receive a cheque for \$200, to be used at the discretion of their science department.

Locally, Waterloo collegiate institute (WCI) placed fourth in the team competition. One of WCI's students, Ali Kazerani, tied for sixth in the individual competition with Preena Nagpal of the Bond Academy in Toronto with a score of 46 out of 60 (or 76.7 percent). Guelph's Centennial collegiate and vocational institute took fifth place in the team competition.

"I was pleased to see two local schools do so well," said Sheila McKee-Protopapas, program co-ordinator of the competition. "Centennial has been in the top five each year of the competition and students from WCI have also done well in past exams."

Students who demonstrate advanced ability in science compete in the Laurier Science Challenge for more than \$10,000 in individual and team cash awards and scholarships. As the first-place winner, Lerer wins \$500 and a \$5,000 scholarship to study in any program offered by Laurier's faculty of science. Second-place finisher, Wu, receives \$250 and a \$2,500 scholarship, while the third to tenth place finishers each receive \$100.

Laurier professors develop questions for the science challenge that go well beyond what's expected in the high-school curriculum. The challenge tests the students' knowledge and problem-solving ability in biology, chemistry, kinesiology, mathematics, physics and psychology. It consists of a two-part examination. Students answer a series of multiple-choice questions in each of the six disciplines and attempt three of six essay questions.

Now in its third year, the challenge continues to grow with 464 participants from 52 schools across Ontario. During the inaugural competition in 2002, 270 participants represented 40 high schools. Last year, 370 students from 48 high schools took the challenge.